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MILTON'S

PARADISE REGAIN'D.

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MILTON'S *K*
PARADISE REGAIN'D.

A
P O E M,
IN
FOUR BOOKS.

A NEW EDITION.

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PARADISE REGAIN'D.

BOOK I.

I WHO ere while the happy garden sung,
By one man's disobedience lost, now sing
Recover'd Paradise to all mankind,
By one man's firm obedience fully try'd
Through all temptation, and the tempter foil'd
In all his wiles, defeated and repuls'd,
And Eden rais'd in the waste wilderness.

Thou Spi'rit who ledst this glorious eremite
Into the desert, his victorious field,
Against the spiritual foe, and brought'st him
thence
By proof th' undoubted Son of God, inspire,
As thou art wont, my prompted song else mute,
And bear through height or depth of nature's
bounds
With prosp'rous wing full summ'd, to tell of
deeds

Above heroic, though in secret done,
And unrecorded left through many an age
Worthy t' have not remain'd so long unsung.

Now had the great Proclaimer, with a voice
More awful than the sound of trumpet, cry'd
Repentance, and Heav'n's kingdom nigh at hand
To all baptiz'd: to his great baptism flock'd
With awe the regions round, and with them
came

From Nazareth the son of Joseph deem'd
To the flood Jordan, came as then obscure,
Unmark'd, unknown; but him the Baptist soon
Descry'd, divinely warn'd, and witness bore
As to his worthier, and would have resign'd
To him his heav'nly office, nor was long
His witness unconfirm'd: on him baptiz'd
Heav'n open'd, and in likeness of a dove
The Spi'rit descended, while the Father's voice
From heav'n pronounc'd him his beloved Son.
That heard the Adversary, who roving still
About the world, at that assembly fam'd
Would not be last, and with the voice divine
Nigh thunder-struck, th' exalted man, to whom
Such high attest was giv'n, a while survey'd
With wonder, then with envy fraught and rage
Flies to his place, nor rests, but in mid air

To council summon all his mighty peers,
Within thick clouds and dark ten-fold involv'd,
A gloomy consistory ; and them amidst
With looks aghast and sad he thus bespake.

O ancient Pow'rs of air and this wide world,
For much more willingly I mention air,
This our old conquest, than remember Hell,
Our hated habitation ; well ye know
How many ages as the years of men,
This universe we have possess'd, and rul'd
In manner at our will th' affairs of earth,
Since Adam and his facil consort Eve
Lost Paradise deceiv'd by me, though since
With dread attending when that fatal wound
Shall be inflicted by the seed of Eve
Upon my head : long the decrees of Heav'n
Delay, for longest time to him is short ;
And now too soon for us the circling hours
This dreaded time have compass'd, wherein we
Must bide the stroke of that long threaten'd
wound,
At least if so we can, and by the head
Broken be not intended all our power
To be infringing'd, our freedom and our being,
In this fair empire won of earth and air ;
For this ill news I bring, the woman's seed

Destin'd to this, is late of woman born:
His birth to our just fear gave no small cause
But his growth now to youth's full flow'r displaying

All virtue, grace, and wisdom to atchieve
Things highest, greatest, multiplies my fear.
Before him a great prophet to proclaim
His coming, is sent harbinger, who all
Invites, and in the consecrated stream,
Pretends to wash off Sin, and fit them so
Purified to receive him pure, or rather
To do him honour as their king; all come,
And he himself among them was baptiz'd,
Not thence to be more pure, but to receive
The testimony' of Heav'n, that who he is
Thenceforth the nations may not doubt; I saw
The prophet do him reverence, on him rising
Out of the water, Heav'n above the clouds
Unfold her chrystal doors, thence on his head
A perfect dove descend, whate'er it meant,
And out of Heav'n the sovereign voice I heard,
This is my Son belov'd, in him am pleas'd.
His mother then is mortal, but his sire
He who obtains the monarchy of Heaven,
And what will he not do t' advance his Son?
His first-begot we know, and fore have felt,
When his fierce thunder drove us to the deep;

Who this is we must learn, for man he seems
In all his lineaments, though in his face
The glimpses of his Father's glory shine.
Ye see our danger on the utmost edge
Of hazard, which admits no long debate,
But must with something sudden be oppos'd
Not force, but well couch'd fraud, well woven
 snares,
Ere in the head of nations he appear
Their king, their leader, and supreme on earth.
I when no other durst, sole undertook
The dismal expedition to find out
And ruin Adam, and th'exploit perform'd
Successfully; a calmer voyage now
Will waite me; and the way found prosperous
 once
Induces best to hope of like success.

He ended, and his words impression left
Of much amazement to th' infernal crew,
Distracted and surpriz'd with deep dismay
At these sad tidings; but no time was then
For long indulgence to the fears or grief:
Unanimous they all commit their care
And management of this main enterprize
To him their great dictator, whose attempt

At first against mankind so well had thriv'd
In Adam's overthrow, and led their march
From Hell's deep vaulted den to dwell in light,
Regents and potentates, and kings, yea Gods
Of many a pleasant realm and province wide.
So to the coast of Jordan he directs
His easy steps, girded with snaky wiles,
Where he might likeliest find this new declar'd
This man of men, attested Son of God,
Temptation and all guile on him to try;
So to subvert whom he suspected rais'd
To end his reign on earth so long enjoy'd
But contrary unweeting he fulfill'd
The purpos'd counsel pre-ordain'd and fix'd
Of the most High, who in full frequency bright
Of Angels, thus to Gabriel smiling spake.

Gabriel, this day by proof thou shalt behold,
Thou and all Angels conversant on earth
With man or men's affairs, how I begin
To verify that solemn message late,
On which I sent thee to the virgin pure
In Gallilee, that she should bear a son
Great in renown, and call'd the Son of God;
Then toldst her doubting how these things could
be
To her a virgin, that on her should come

The Holy Ghost, and the pow'r of the Highest
O'er-shadow her; this man born and now up
grown,
To show him worthy of his birth divine
And high prediction, henceforth I expose
To Satan; let him tempt and now assay
His utmost subtlety, because he boasts
And vaunts of his great cunning to the throng
Of his apostacy; he might have learnt
Less overweening, since he fail'd in Job,
Whose constant perseverance overcame
Whate'er his cruel malice could invent.
He now shall know I can produce a man
Of female seed, far abler to resist
All his solicitations, and at length
All his vast force, and drive him back to Hell,
Winning by conquest what the first man lost
By fallacy surpris'd. But first I mean
To exercise him in the wilderness,
There shall he first lay down the rudiments
Of his great warfare, ere I send him forth
To conquer Sin and Death, the two grand foes,
By humiliation and strong sufferance:
His weakness shall o'ercome Satanic strength,
And all the world, and mass of sinful flesh;
That all the Angels and ethereal Powers,

They now, and men hereafter, may discern,
From what consummate virtue I have chose
This perfect man, by merit call'd my Son,
To earn salvation for the sons of men.

So spake th' eternal Father, and all Heaven
Admiring stood a space, then into hymns
Burst forth, and in celestial measures mov'd,
Circling the throne and singing, while the hand
Sung with the voice, and this the argument.

Victory' and triumph to the Son of God
Now entring his great duel, not of arms,
But to vanquish by wisdom hellish wiles.
The father knows the Son; therefore secure
Ventures his filial virtue, though untry'd,
Against whate'er may tempt, whate'er seduce,
Allure, or terrify, or undermine.
Be frustrate all ye stratagems of Hell,
And devilish machinations come to nought.

So they in Heav'n their odes and vigils tun'd:
Mean while the Son of God, who yet some days
Lodg'd in Bethabara where John baptiz'd,
Musing and much revolving in his breast,
How best the mighty work he might begin
Of Saviour to mankind, and which way first

Publish his God-like office now mature.
One day forth walk'd alone, the Spirit leading
And his deep thoughts, the better to converse
With solitude, till far from track of men,
Thought following thought, and step by step
 led on,
He enter'd now the bord'ring desert wild,
And with dark shades and rocks environ'd
 round,
His holy meditations thus pursu'd.

O what a multitude of thoughts at once
Awaken'd in me swarm, while I consider
What from within I feel myself, and hear
What from without comes often to my ears,
Ill sorting with my present state compar'd!
When I was yet a child, no childish play
To me was pleasing; all my mind was set
Serious to learn and know, and thence to do
What might be public good; myself I thought
Born to that end, born to promote all truth
All righteous things; therefore above my years
The law of God I read, and found it sweet,
Made it my whole delight, and in it grew
To such perfection, that ere yet my age
Had measur'd twice six years, at our great feast
I went into the temple, there to hear

The teachers of our law, and to propose
What might improve my knowledge or their
own;

And was admir'd by all: yet this not all
To which my spi'rit aspir'd; victorious deeds
Flam'd in my heart, heroic acts, one while
To rescue Israel from the Roman yoke,
Then to subdue and quell o'er all the earth
Brute violence and proud tyrannic power,
Till truth were freed, and equity restor'd:
Yet held it more humane, more heav'nly first
By willing words to conquer willing hearts,
And make persuation do the work of fear;
At least to try, and teach the erring soul
Not wilfully mis-doing, but unaware
Mised; the stubborn only to subdue.
These growing thoughts my mother soon per-
ceiving

By words at times cast forth inly rejoic'd,
And said to me apart, High are thy thoughts
O Son, but nourish them and let them soar
To what height sacred virtue and true worth
Can raise them, though above example high;
By matchless deeds express thy matchless Sire.
For know, thou art no son of mortal man;
Though men esteem thee low of parentage,
Thy father is th' eternal King who rules

All Heav'n and Earth, Angels, and Sons of men :

A messenger from God foretold thy birth

Conceiv'd in me a virgin, he foretold

Thou should'st be great and sit on David's throne,

And of thy kingdom there shall be no end.

At thy nativity a glorious quire

Of Angels in the fields of Bethlehem sung

To shepherds watching at their folds by night,

And told them the Messiah now was born

Where they might see him, and to thee they came,

Directed to the manger where thou lay'st,

For in the inn was left no better room :

A star, not seen before, in Heav'n appearing

Guided the wise men thither from the east,

To honour thee with incense, myrrh, and gold,

By whose bright course led on they found the place,

Affirming it thy star new grav'n in Heav'n

By which they knew the king of Israel born.

Just Simeon and prophetic Anna, warn'd

By vision, found thee in the temple, and spake

Before the altar and the vested priest,

Like things of thee to all that present stood.

This having heard, strait I again resolv'd

The law and prophets, searching what was writ
Concerning the Messiah, to our scribes
Known partly, and soon found to whom they
spake

I am; this chiefly, that my way must lie
Through many a hard assay ev'n to the death,
Ere I the promis'd Kingdom can attain,
Or work redemption for mankind, whose sins
Full weight must be transferr'd upon my head.
Yet neither thus dishearten'd or dismay'd,
The time prefix'd I waited, when behold
The Baptist (of whose birth I oft had heard,
Not knew by sight) now come, who was to
come

Before Messiah and his way prepare.
I as all others to his baptism came
Which I believ'd was from above; but he
Strait knew me, and with loudest voice pro-
claim'd

Me him (for it was shewn him so from Heaven)
Me him whose harbinger he was; and first
Refus'd on me his baptism to confer,
As much his greater, and was hardly won:
But as I rose out of the laving stream,
Heav'n open'd her eternal doors, from whence
The Spi'rit descended on me like a dove,
And last the sum of all, my Father's voice,

Audibly heard from Heav'n, pronounc'd me his
Me his belov'd Son in whom alone I know'd
He was well pleas'd; by which I knew the time
Now full, that I no more shall live obscure,
But openly begin, as best becomes
Th' authority which I deriv'd from Heaven,
And now by some strong motion I am led
Into this wilderness, to what intent
I learn not yet, perhaps I need not know,
For what concerns my knowledge God reveals.

So spake our Morning Star then in his rise,
And looking round on every side beheld
A pathless desert, dusk with horrid shades;
The way he came not having mark'd, return
Was difficult, by human steps untrod;
And he still on was led, but with such thoughts
Accompanied of things past and to come
Lodg'd in his breast, as well might recommend
Such solitude before choicest society.
Full forty days he pass'd whether on hill
Sometimes, anon in shady vale, each night
Under the covert of some ancient oak,
Or cedar, to defend him from the dew,
Or harbour'd in one cave, is not reveal'd;
Nor tasted human food, nor hunger felt

Till those days ended, hunger'd then at last
Among wild beasts: they at his sight grew mild,
Nor sleeping him nor waking harm'd, his walk
The fiery serpent fled, and noxious worm,
The lion and fierce tiger glar'd aloof.

But now an aged man in rural weeds
Following as seem'd, in quest of some stray ewe,
Or wither'd sticks to gather, which might serve
Against a winter's day when winds blow keen,
To warm him wet return'd from field at eve,
He saw approach, who first with curious eye
Perus'd him, then with words thus utter'd spake.

Sir, what ill chance hath brought thee to this
place

So far from path or road of men, who pass
In troop or caravan? for single none
Durst ever, who return'd, and dropt not here
His carcase, pin'd with hunger and with drought.
I ask thee rather, and the more admire,
For that to me thou seem'st the man, whom late
Our new baptizing Prophet at the ford
Of Jordan honour'd so, and call'd thee Son
Of God; I saw and heard, for we sometimes
Who dwell this wild, constrain'd by want, come
forth

To town or village nigh (nighest is far)

Where aught we hear, and curious are to hear
What happens new; fame also finds us out.

To whom the Son of God. Who brought me
hither,
Will bring me hence; no other guide I seek.

By miracle he may, reply'd the swain,
What other way I see not, for we here
Live on tough roots and stubs, to thirst incur'd,
More than the camel †, and to drink go far,
Men to much misery and hardship born;
But if thou be the Son of God, command
That out of these hard itones be made thee bread,
So shalt thou save thyself and us relieve
With food, whereof we wretched seldom taste.

He ended, and the Son of God reply'd.
Think'st thou such force in bread? is it not writ-
ten
(For I discern thee no other than thou seem'st)
Man lives not by bread only, but each word

† It is commonly said that camels will go with-
out water three or four days.

Proceeding from the mouth of God, who fed
 Our fathers here with Manna? in the mount
 Moses was forty days, nor eat nor drank;
 And forty days Elijah without food
 Wander'd this barren waste; the same I now:
 Why dost thou then suggest in me distrust,
 Knowing who I am, as I know who thou art?

Whom thus answer'd th' Arch-Fiend now
 undisguis'd.
 'Tis true, I am that Spirit unfortunate,
 Who leagu'd with millions more in rash revolt
 Kept not my happy station, but was driven
 With them from bliss to the bottomless deep,
 Yet to that hideous place not so confin'd
 By rigour unconniving, but that oft
 Leaving my dolorous prison I enjoy
 Large liberty to round this globe of earth,
 Or range in th' air, nor from the Heav'n of
 Heav'ns

Hath he excluded my resort sometimes.
 I came among the sons of God, when he
 Gave up into my hands Uzzean Job
 To prove him, and illustrate his high worth
 And when to all his Angels he propos'd
 To draw the proud king Ahab into fraud
 That he might fall in Ramoth, they demurring,

I undertook that office, and the tongues
Of all his flatt'ring prophets glibb'd with lies
To his destruction, as I had in charge,
For what he bids I do: though I have lost
Much lustre of my native brightness, lost
To be belov'd of God, I have not lost
To love, at least contemplate and admire
What I see excellent in good; or fair,
Or virtuous, I should so have lost all sense.
What can be then less in me than desire
To see thee and approach thee, whom I know
Declar'd the Son of God, to hear attent
Thy wisdom, and behold thy Godlike deeds?
Men generally think me much a foe
To all mankind: why should I? they to me
Never did wrong or violence: by them
I lost not what I lost, rather by them
I gain'd what I have gain'd, and with them dwell
Copartner in these regions of the world,
If not disposer; lend them oft my aid,
Oft my advice by presages and signs,
And answers, oracles, portents, and dreams,
Whereby they may direct their future life:
Envy, they say, excites me thus to gain
Companions of my misery and woe:
At first it may be; but long since with woe
Nearer acquainted, now I feel by proof

That fellowship in pain divides not smart,
Nor lightens aught each man's peculiar load.
Small consolation then, were man adjoin'd:
This wounds me most (what can it less?) that
man,
Man fall'n shall be restor'd, I never more.

To whom our Saviour sternly thus reply'd.
Deservedly thou griev'st, compos'd of lies
From the beginning, and in lies wilt end;
Who boast'st release from Hell, and leave to
come
Into the Heav'n of Heav'ns: thou com'st indeed,
As a poor miserable captive thrall
Comes to the place where he before had sat
Among the prime in splendor, now depos'd,
Ejected, emptied, gaz'd, unpitied, shunn'd,
A spectacle of ruin or of scorn
'To all the host of Heav'n: the happy place
Imparts to thee no happiness, no joy,
Rather inflames thy torment, representing
Lost bliss, to thee no more communicable,
So never more in Hell than when in Heav'n.
But thou art serviceable to Heav'n's King.
Wilt thou impute t' obedience what thy fear
Extorts, or pleasure to do ill excites?
What but thy malice mov'd thee to misdeem.

Of righteous Job, then cruelly t' afflict him
With all afflictions? but his patience won.
The other service was thy chosen task,
To be a liar in four hundred mouths;
For lying is thy sustenance, thy food.
Yet thou pretend'st to truth; all oracles
By thee are giv'n, and what confess'd more true
Among the nations? that hath been thy craft,
By mixing somewhat true to vent more lies.
But what have been thy answers, what but dark,
Ambiguous and with double sense deluding,
Which they who ask'd have seldom understood,
And not well understood as good not known?
Whoever by consulting at thy shrine
Return'd the wiser, or the more instruct
To fly or follow what concern'd him most,
And run not sooner to his fatal snare?
For God hath justly giv'n the nations up
To thy delusions; justly, since they fell
Idolatrous; but when his purpose is
Among them to declare his providence
To thee not known, whence hast thou then thy
truth,
But from him or his Angels president
In ev'ry province? who themselves disdaining
T' approach thy temples, give thee in command
What to the smallest tittle thou shalt say

To thy adorers ; thou with trembling fear ;
Or like a fawning parasite obey'st ;
Then to thyself ascrib'st the truth foretold.
But this thy glory shall be soon retrench'd ;
No more shalt thou by oracling abuse
The Gentiles ; henceforth they are ceas'd,
And thou no more with pomp and sacrifice
Shalt be inquir'd at Delphos or elsewhere,
At least in vain, for they shall find thee mute.
God hath now sent his living oracle
Into the world to teach his final will,
And sends his Spi'rit of truth henceforth to
dwell
In pious hearts, an inward oracle
To all truth requisite for men to know.

So spake our Saviour ; but the subtle Fiend
Though inly stung with anger and disdain,
Dissembled, and this answer smooth return'd.

Sharply thou hast insisted on rebuke,
And urg'd me hard with doings, which not will
But misery hath wrested from me : where
Easily can'st thou find one miserable
And not enforc'd oft-times to part from truth,
If it may stand him more in stead to lie,
Say and unsay, fiegn, flatter, or abjure ;

But thou art plac'd above me, thou art Lord ;
From thee I can and must submit endure
Check or reproof, and glad to scape so quit.
Hard are the ways of truth, and rough to walk
Smooth on the tongue discours'd, pleasing to th'
ear

And tunable as sylvan pipe or song ;
What wonder then if I delight to hear
Her dictates from thy mouth ? most men admire
Virtue, who follow not her lore : permit me
To hear thee when I come (since no man comes)
And talk at least, though I despair t' attain.
Thy Father, who is holy, wise and pure,
Suffers the hypocrite or atheous priest
To tread this sacred courts and minister
About this altar, handling holy things,
Praying or vowing, and vouchsaf'd his voice
To Balaam reprobate, a prophet yet
Inspir'd ; disdain not such access to me.

To whom our Saviour with unalter'd brow,
Thy coming hither, though I know thy scope,
I bid not or forbid ; do as thou find'st
Permission from above ; thou can'st not more.

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He added not ; and Satan bowing low
His gray diffimulation, disappear'd
Into thin air diffus'd : for now began
Night with her fullen wings to double-shade
The desert : fowls in their clay nests were
couch'd ;
And now wild beasts came forth the woods to
roam.

THE END OF THE FIRST BOOK.

PARADISE REGAIN'D.

BOOK II.

MEAN while the new baptiz'd, who yet remain'd

At Jordan with the Baptist, and had seen
Him whom they heard so late expressly call'd
Jesus Messiah Son of God declar'd,
And on that high authority had believ'd,
And with him talk'd, and with him lodg'd I
mean

Andrew and Simon, famous after known,
With others though in holy writ not nam'd,
Now missing him their joy so lately found,
So lately found, and so abruptly gone,
Began to doubt, and doubted many days,
And as the days increas'd, increas'd their doubt :
Sometimes they thought he might be only shewn,
And for a time caught up to God, as once
Moses was in the mount, and missing long;

And the great Thibite †, who on fiery wheels
 Rode up to Heav'n, yet once again to come.
 Therefore as those young prophets then with
 care

Sought lost Elijah, so in each place these
 Nigh to Bethabara; in Jericho
 The city' of Palms, Enon, and Salem old,
 Macærus, and each town or city wall'd
 On this side the broad lake Genezaret,
 Or in Peræa; but return'd in vain.
 Then on the bank of Jordan, by a creek,
 Where winds with reeds and osiers whisp'ring
 play
 Plain fishermen, no greater men them call,
 Close in a cottage low together got,
 Their unexpected loss and plaints out breath'd

Alas, from what high hope to what relapse
 Unlook'd for are we fall'n! our eyes beheld
 Messiah certainly now come, so long
 Expected of our fathers; we have heard
 His words, his wisdom full of grace and truth;
 Now, now, for sure, deliverance is at hand,

† Elijah, a native of Thibbe, a city of the coun-
 try of Gilead, beyond Jordan.

The kingdom shall to Israel be restor'd :
Thus we rejoic'd, but soon our joy is turn'd
Into perplexity and new amaze :
For whither he is gone, what accident
Hath rapt him from us? will he now retire
After appearance, and again prolong
Our expectation? God of Israel,
Send thy Messiah forth, the time is come ;
Behold the King of th' earth how they oppress
Thy chosen, to what height their power unjust
They have exalted, and behind them cast
All fear of thee ; arise and vindicate
Thy glory, free thy people from their yoke.
But let us wait ; thus far he hath perform'd,
Sent his Anointed, and to us reveal'd him,
By his great prophet, pointed at and shown
In public, and with him we have convers'd ;
Let us be glad of this, and all our fears
Lay on his providence ; he will not fail,
Nor will withdraw him now, nor will recall,
Mock us with his blest sight, then snatch him
hence ;
Soon we shall see our hope, our joy return.

Thus they out of their complaints new hope re-
sume
To find whom at the first they found unsought :

But to his mother Mary, when she saw
Others return'd from baptism, not her son
Nor left at Jordan, tidings of him none,
Within her breast though calm, her breast though
pure,
Motherly cares and fears got head, and rais'd
Some troubled thoughts, which she in sighs thus
clad.

Oh what avails me now that honour high
To have conceiv'd of God, or that salute
Hail highly favour'd, among women blest!
While I to sorrows am no less advanc'd,
And fears as eminent, above the lot
Of other women, by the birth I bore,
In such a season born when scarce a shed
Could be obtain'd to shelter him or me
From the bleak air; a stable was our warmth,
A manger his; yet soon enforc'd to fly
Thence into Egypt, till the murd'rous king
Were dead, who sought his life, and missing fill'd
With infant blood the streets of Bethlehem;
From Egypt home return'd, in Nazareth
Had been our dwelling many years; his life
Private, unactive, calm, contemplative,
Little suspicious to any king, but now
Full grown to man, acknowledg'd as I hear,

By John the Baptist, and in public shown.
Son own'd from Heav'n by his Father's voice;
I look'd for some great change; to honour? no,
But trouble, as old Simeon plain foretold,
That to the fall and rising he should be
Of many in Israel, and to a sign
Spoken against, that through my very soul
A sword shall pierce; this is my favour'd lot,
My exaltation to afflictions high;
Afflicted I may be, it seems, and blest;
I will not argue that, nor will repine.
But where delays he now? some great intent
Conceals him: when twelve years he scarce had
seen

I lost him, but so found, as well I saw
He could not lose himself; but went about
His Father's business; what he meant I mus'd,
Since understand; much more his absence now
Thus long to some great purpose he obscures,
But I to wait with patience am inur'd;
My heart hath been a store-house long of things
And say'ings laid up, portending strange events.

Thus Mary pond'ring oft, and oft to mind
Recalling what remarkably had pass'd
Since first her salutation heard, with thoughts
Meekly compos'd awaited the fulfilling;

The while her son tracing the desert wild,
Sole but with holiest meditations fed,
Into himself descended, and at once
All his great work to come before him set;
How to begin how to accomplish best
His end of being on earth, and mission high:
For Satan with sly preface to return
Had left him vacant, and with speed was gone
Up to the middle region of thick air,
Where all his potentates in council sat;
There without sign of boast, or sign of joy,
Solicitous and blank he thus began.

Princes, Heav'n's ancient Sons, ethereal
Thrones,
Demonian Spirits now, from th' element
Each of his reign allotted, rightlier call'd
Pow'rs of fire, air, water, and earth beneath,
So may we hold our place, and these mild seats
Without new trouble; such an enemy
Is risen to invade us, who no less
Threatens than our expulsion down to Hell;
I, as I undertook, and with the vote
Consenting in full frequency was impower'd,
Have found him, view'd him, tasted him, but
find
Far other labour to be undergone

Than when I dealt with Adam first of Men,
Though Adam by his wife's allurements fell,
However to this man inferior far,
If he be man by mother's side at least,
With more than human gifts from Heav'n adorned.

Perfections absolute, graces divine,
An amplitude of mind to greatest deeds.
Therefore I am return'd, lest confidence
Of my success with Eve in Paradise
Deceive ye to persuasion over-sure
Of like succeeding here; I summon all
Rather to be in readiness, with hand
Or council to assist; lest I who erst
Thought none my equal, now be over-match'd.

So spake th' old Serpent doubting, and from
all

With clamour was assur'd their utmost aid
At his command; when from amidst them rose
Belial, the dissolute Spirit that fell,
The sensualest, and after Asmodai
The fleshliest Incubus, and thus advis'd.

Set women in his eye, and in his walk,
Among daughters of men the fairest found;

Many are in each region passing fair
As the noon sky; more like to Goddeses
Then mortal creatures, graceful and discreet
Expert in amorous arts, inchanting tongues
Persuasive, virgin majesty with mild
And sweet allay'd, yet terrible to approach
Skill'd to retire, and in retiring draw
Hearts after them tangled in amorous nets.
Such object hath the pow'r to soften and tame
Severest temper, smoothe the rugged'st brow,
Enerve, and with voluptuous hope dissolve,
Draw out with credulous desire, and lead
At will the manliest, resolute'st breast,
As the magnetic hardest iron draws.
Woman, when nothing else, beguil'd the heart
Of wisest Solomon, and made him build,
And made him bow to the Gods of his wives.

To whom quick answer Satan thus return'd.
Belial, in much uneven scale thou weigh'st
All others by thyself; because of old
Thou thyself doat'st on woman-kind, admiring
Their shape, their colour, and attractive grace,
None are, thou think'st, but taken with such
toys.

Before the flood thou with thy lusty crew,
False titled sons of God, roaming the earth

Cast wanton eyes on the daughters of men,
And coupl'd with them, and begot a race.
Have we not seen, or by relation heard,
In courts and regal chambers how thou lurk'st,
In wood or grove by mossy fountain side,
In valley or green meadow, to way-lay
Some beauty rare, Calisto, Clymene,
Daphne, or Semele, Antiopa,
Or Amynone, Syrinx, many more
Too long, then lay'st thy scopes on names and
dor'd,

Apollo, Neptune, Jupiter, or Pan,
Satir, or Faun, or Sylvan? but these haunts
Delight not all; among the sons of men
How many have with a smile made small ac-
count

Of beauty and her lures, easily scorn'd
All her assaults, on worthier things intent?
Remember that Pellean † conqueror,
A youth, how all the beauties of the east
He slightly view'd, and slightly overpass'd;

E 2

† Alexander the Great, who was born at Pella
in Macedonia: and his continence and clemency
to Darius's queen and daughters are commended
by the Historians.

How he firnam'd of Africa † dismiss'd
In his prime youth the fair Iberian maid.
For Solomon, he liv'd at ease, and full
Of honour, wealth, high fare, aim'd not beyond
Higher design than to enjoy his state;
Thence to the bait of woman lay expos'd;
But he whom we attempt is wiser far
Than Solomon, of more exalted mind,
Made and set wholly on th' accomplishment
Of greatest things; what woman will you find,
Though of this age the wonder and the fame,
On whom his leisure will vouchsafe an eye
Of fond desire? or should she confident,
As sitting queen ador'd on beauty's throne,
Descend with all her winning charms begirt
T' enamour, as the zone of Venus once
Wrought that effect on Jove, so fables tell;
How would one look from his majestic brow
Seated as on the top of virtue's hill,
Discountenance her despis'd, and put to rout
All her array; her female pride deject,
Or turn to reverent awe? for beauty stands

† The continence of Scipio Africanus at the age of twenty-four, and his generosity in restoring a Spanish lady to her husband and friends, are celebrated by Pulibius, Lib. 10.

In th' admiration only of weak minds
Led captive ; cease to admire, and all her plumes
Fall flat and shrink into a trivial toy,
At every sudden slighting quite abash'd :
Therefore with manlier objects we must try
His constancy, with such as have more show
Of worth, of honour, glory, and popular praise ;
Rocks whereon greatest men have ofttest wreck'd ;
Or that which only seems to satisfy
Lawful desires of nature, not beyond ;
And now I know he hungers where no food
Is to be found, in the wide wilderness ;
The rest commit to me, I shall let pass
No' advantage, and his strength as oft assay.

He ceas'd, and heard their grant in loud ac-
claim,

Then forthwith to him takes a chosen band
Of Spirits likest to himself in guile
To be at hand, and at his beck appear,
If cause were to unfold some active scene
Of various persons, each to know his part ;
Then to the desert takes with these his flight ;
Where still from shade to shade the Son of God
After forty days fasting had remain'd,
Now hungry first, and to himself thus said.

Where will this end? four times ten days I've
pass'd

Wand'ring this woody maze, and human food
Nor tasted, nor had appetite: that fast
To virtue I impute not, or count part
Of what I suffer here; if nature need not
Or God support nature without repast
Though needing, what praise is it to indure?
But now I feel I hunger, which declares
Nature hath need of what she asks; yet God
Can satisfy that need some other way,
Though hunger still remain: so it remain
Without this body's waiting, I content me,
And from the sting of famine fear no harm,
Nor mind it, fed with better thoughts that feed
Me hung'ring more to do my Father's will.

It was the hour of night, when thus the Son
Commun'd in silent walk, then laid him down
Under the hospitable covert nigh
Of trees thick interwoven; there he slept,
And dream'd, as appetite is wont to dream,
Of meats and drinks, nature's refreshment sweet;
Him thought, he by the brook of Cherith stood,
And saw the ravens with their horny beaks
Food to Elijah bringing ev'n and morn.

Though ravenous, taught to abstain from what
they brought :

He saw the prophet also how he fled
Into the desert, and how there he slept
Under a juniper ; then how awak'd,
He found his supper on the coals prepar'd,
And by the Angel was bid rise and eat,
And eat the second time after repose,
The strength whereof suffic'd him forty days ;
Sometimes that with Elijah he partook,
Or as a guest with Daniel at his pulse.
Thus wore out night, and now the herald lark
Left his ground nest, high tow'ring to descry
The morn's approach, and greet her with his
song,

As lightly from his grassy couch up rose
Our Saviour, and found all was but a dream,
Fasting he went to sleep, and fasting wak'd.
Up to a hill anon his steps he rear'd,
From whose high top to ken the prospect round,
If cottage were in view, sheep-cote or herd ;
But cottage, herd, or sheep-cote none he saw,
Only' in a bottom saw a pleasant grove,
With chant of tuneful birds resounding loud ;
Thither he bent his way ; determin'd there
To rest at noon, and enter'd soon the shade

High rooft, and walks beneath, and alleys
brown,
That open'd in the midst a woody scene ;
Nature's own work it seem'd (nature taught
art)
And to a superstitious eye the haunt
Of Wood-Gods and Wood-Nymphs ; he view'd
it round,
When suddenly a man before him stood,
Not rustic as before, but seemlier clad,
As one in city', or court, or palace bred,
And with fair speech these words to him ad-
dress'd.

With granted leave officious I return,
But much more wonder that the Son of God
In this wild solitude so long should bide
Of all things destitute, and well I know,
Not without hunger. Others of some note,
As story tells, have trod this wilderness ;
The fugitive bond-woman § with her son
Out-cast Nebaioth, yet found here relief
By a providing Angel ; all the race

§ Hagar, who fled from the face of her mis-
tress, Gen. xvi. 6. and is therefore called a fu-
gitive.

Of Israel here had famish'd, had not God
Rain'd from Heav'n Manna ; and that Prophet
bold

Native of Thebez wand'ring here was fed
Twice by a voice inviting him to eat :
Of thee these forty days none hath regard,
Forty and more deserted here indeed.

To whom thus Jesus. What conclud'st thou
hence ?

They all had need, as I thou see'st have none.

How hast thou hunger then ? Satan reply'd.
Tell me if food were now before thee set,
Would'st thou not eat ? Therefore as I like
The giver, answer'd Jesus. Why should that
Cause thy refusal ? said the subtle Fiend.
Hast thou not right to all created things ?
Owe not all creatures by just right to thee
Duty and service, nor to stay till bid,
But tender all their pow'r ? nor mention I
Meats by the Law unclean, or offer'd first
To idols, those young Daniel could refuse ;
Nor proffer'd by an enemy, though who
Would scruple that, with want oppress'd ? Be-
hold

Nature asham'd, or better to express,
Troubled that thou should'st hunger, hath pur-
vey'd

From all the elements her choicest store
To treat thee as beseems, and as her Lord
With honour, only deign to sit and eat.

He spake no dream, for as his words had end,
Our Saviour lifting up his eyes beheld
An ample space under the broadest shade
A table richly spread in regal mode,
With dishes pil'd, and meats of noblest sort
And flavour, beasts of chase, or fowl of game
In pastry built, or from the spit, or boil'd,
Gris amber-steam'd; all fish from sea or shore,
Fresher, or purling brook, of shell or fin,
And exquisite name, for which was drain'd
Pontus, and Lucrine bay, and Afric coast.
Alas, how simple to those cates compar'd,
Was that crude apple that diverted Eve!
And at a stately side-board by the wine
That fragrant smell diffus'd, in order stood
Tall stripling youths rich clad, of fairer hue
Than Ganymed or Hylas †; distant more.

† These were two beautiful youths and be-
lov'd, the one by Jupiter, the other by Her-

Under the trees now tripp'd, now solemn stood
Nymph's of Diana's train, and Naiades
With fruits and flow'rs from Amalthea's horn,
And ladies of th' Hesperides, that seem'd
Fairer than feign'd of old, or fabled since
Of fairy damsels met in forest wide
By knights of Logres, or of Lyones,
Lancelot, or Pelleas, or Pellenore :
And all the while harmonious airs were heard
Of chiming strings, or charming pipes, and winds
Of gentlest gale Arabian odours fann'd
From their soft wings, and Flora's earliest
smells.

Such was the splendor, and the Tempter now
His invitation earnestly renew'd,

What doubts the Son of God to sit and eat ?
These are not fruits forbidden ; no interdict
Defends the touching of these viands pure :
Their taste no knowledge works at least of evil,
But life preserves, destroys life's enemy,
Hunger, with sweet restorative delight.

E 2

cules. Ganymed was cup-bearer to Jupiter, and
Hylas drew water for Hercules, and therefore
are properly mention'd on this occasion.

All these are Spi'rits of air, and woods, and
springs,
Thy gentle ministers, who come to pay
Thee homage, and acknowledge thee their Lord;
What doubt'st thou Son of God? sit down and
eat.

To whom thus Jesus temp'rately reply'd.
Said'st thou not that to all things I had right?
And who witholds my pow'r that right to use?
Shall I receive by gift what of my own,
When and where likes me best, I can command?
I can at will, doubt not, as soon as thou,
Command a table in this wilderness,
And call swift flights of Angels ministrant
Array'd in glory on my cup to' attend:
Why shouldst thou then obtrude this diligence,
In vain, where no acceptance it can find?
And with my hunger what hast thou to do?
Thy pompous delicacies I contemn,
And count thy specious gifts no gifts but guiles.

To whom thus answer'd Satan malecontent,
That I have also pow'r to give thou seest;
If of that pow'r I bring the voluntary
What I might have bestow'd on whom I pleas'd,
And rather opportunely in this place

Chose to impart to thy apparent need,
Why shouldst thou not accept it? but I see
What I can do or offer is suspect;
Of these things others quickly will dispose,
Whose pains have earn'd the far set spoil.

With that

Both table and provision vanish quite
With sound of harpies wings, and talons heard;
Only the importune Tempter still remain'd,
And with these words his temptation pursu'd.

By hunger, that each other creature tames,
Thou art not to be harm'd, therefore not
mov'd;

Thy temperance invincible besides,
For no allurement yields to appetite,
And all thy heart is set on high designs,
High actions; but wherewith to be atchiev'd?
Great acts require great means of enterprise;
Thou art unknown, unfriended, low of birth,
A carpenter thy father known, thyself
Bred up in poverty and straits at home,
Lost in a desert here and hunger bit:
Which way or from what hope dost thou as-
pire

To greatness? whence authority deriv'd?
What followers, what retinue canst thou gain,

Or at thy heels the dizzy multitude,
Longer than thou canst feed them on thy cost?
Money brings honour, friends, conquest, and
realms :

What rais'd Antipater the Edomite,
And his Son Herod plac'd on Judah's throne,
(Thy throne) but gold that got him puissant
friends?

Therefore, if at great things thou wouldst arrive,

Get riches first, get wealth, and treasure heap,
Not difficult, if thou hearken to me;

Riches are mine, fortune is in my hand;
They whom I favour thrive in wealth amain,
While virtue, valour, wisdom sit in want.

To whom thus Jesus patiently reply'd.
Yet wealth without these three is impotent
To gain dominion, or to keep it gain'd.
Witness those antient empires of the earth,
In heighth of all their flowing wealth dissolv'd;
But men endued with these have oft attain'd
In lowest poverty to highest deeds;
Gideon, and Jephtha, and the shepherd lad,
Whose offspring on the throne of Judah sat
So many ages, and shall yet regain
That seat, and reign in Israel without end.

Among the Heathen, (for throughout the world
To me is not unknown what hath been done
Worthy of memorial) canst thou not remember
Quintius, Fabricus, Curius, Regulus :
For I esteem those names of men so poor
Who could do mighty things, and could con-
temn

Riches though offer'd from the hand of kings,
And what in me seems wanting, but that I
May also in this poverty as soon
Accomplish what they did, perhaps and more ?
Extol not riches then, the toil of fools,
The wise man's cumbrance if not snare, more
apt

To slacken virtue, and abate her edge,
Than prompt her to do ought may merit
praise.

What if with like aversion I reject
Riches and realms ; yet not for that a crown,
Golden in show, is but a wreath of thorns,
Brings dangers, troubles, cares, and sleepless
nights

To him who wears the regal diadem,
When on his shoulders each man's burden lies ;
For therein stands the office of a king,
His honor, virtue, merit and chief praise,
That for the public all this weight he bears.

Yet he who reigns within himself, and rules
Passions, desires, and fears, is more a king!
Which every wise and virtuous man attains:
And who attains not, ill aspires to rule
Cities of men, or head-strong multitudes,
Subject himself to anarchy within,
Or lawless passions in him which he serves.
But to guide nations in the way of truth
By saving doctrine, and from error lead
To know, and knowing worship God aright
Is yet more kingly; this attracts the soul,
Governs the inner man, the nobler part;
That other o'er the body only reigns,
And oft by force, which to a generous mind
So reigning can be no sincere delight.
Besides to give a kingdom hath been thought
Greater and nobler done, and to lay down
Far more magnanimous, than to assume.
Riches are needless then, both for themselves,
And for thy reason why they should be sought,
To gain a scepter, oftest better miss'd.

THE END OF THE SECOND BOOK.

PARADISE REGAIN'D.

BOOK III.

So spake the Son of God, and Satan stood
A while as mute confounded what to say,
What to reply, confuted and convinc'd
Of his weak arguing, and fallacious drift;
At length collecting all his serpent wiles,
With soothing words renew'd, him thus accost.

I see thou know'st what is of use to know,
What best to say can'st say, to do canst do;
Thy actions to thy words accord, thy words
To thy large heart give utterance due, thy heart
Contains of good, wise, just, the perfect shape.
Should kings and nations from thy mouth consult,

Thy counsel would be as the oracle
Urim and Thummim, those oraculous gems

On Aaron's breast ; or tongue of seers old
Infallable : Or wert thou fought to deeds
That might require th' array of war, thy skill
Of conduct would be such, that all the world
Could not sustain thy prowess, or subsist
In battle, though against thy few in arms.
These God-like virtues wherefore dost thou hide,
Affecting private life, or more obscure
In savage wilderness ? wherefore deprive
All earth her wonder at thy acts, thyself
The same and glory, glory the reward
That sole excites to high attempts, the flame
Of most erected spi'rits, most temper'd pure
Ethereal, who all pleasures else despise,
All treasures and all gain esteem as dross,
And dignities and pow'rs all but the highest ?
Thy years are ripe, and over-ripe : the son
Of Macedonian Philip had ere these
Won Asia, and the throne of Cyrus held
At his dispose ; young Scipio had brought down
The Carthaginian pride ; young Pompey quell'd
The Pontic king, and in triumph had rode.
Yet years, and to ripe years judgment mature,
Quench not the thirst of glory but augment.
Great Julius, whom now all the world admires
The more he grew in years, the more inflam'd
With glory, wept that he had liv'd so long

Inglorious & but thou yet art not too late.

To whom our Saviour calmly thus reply'd.
Thou neither dost persuade me to seek wealth
For empire's sake, nor empire to affect
For glory's sake by all thy argument.
For what is glory but the blaze of fame,
The peoples praise, if always praise unmix'd?
And what the people but a herd confus'd,
A miscellaneous rabble, who extol
Things vulgar, and well weigh'd, scarce worth
the praise?

They praise, and they admire they know not
what,

And know not whom, but as one leads the
other;

And what delight to be by such extoll'd,

G 2

& Alluding to a story related of Julius Cæsar, that one day reading the story of Alexander, he sat awhile very thoughtful, and at last burst into tears, and his friends wond'ring at the reason of it, do you not think, said he, I have just cause to weep, when I consider that Alexander at my age had conquer'd so many nations, and I have all this time done nothing that is memorable.

To live upon their tongues and be their talk,
Of whom to be disprais'd were no small praise?
His lot who dares be singularly good.

Th' intelligent among them and the wise
Are few, and glory scarce of few is rais'd.

This is true glory and renown, when God
Looking on th' earth, with approbation marks
The just man, and divulges him through Heav'n
To all his Angels, who with true applause
Recount his praises: thus he did to Job,

When to extend his fame through Heav'n and
Earth,

As thou to thy reproach may'st well remember,
He ask'd thee, Hast thou seen my servant Job?
Famous he was in Heav'n, on Earth less known;
Where glory is false glory' attributed
To things not glorious, men not worthy' of
fame

They err who count it glorious to subdue
By conquest far and wide, to over-run
Large countries, and in fields great battles win,
Great cities by assault: what do these worthies,
But rob, and spoil, burn, slaughter, and inflave
Peaceable nations, neighb'ring, or remote,
Made captive, yet deserving freedom more
Than those their conquerors, who leave behind
Nothing but ruin wheresoe'er they rove,

And all the flourishing works of peace destroy,
Then swell with pride, and must be titled Gods,
Great Benefactors of mankind, Deliverers,
Worshipt with temple, priest, and sacrifice;
One is the son of Jove, of Mars the other;
Till conqu'ror Death discover them scarce men,
Rolling in brutish vices, and deform'd,
Violent or shameful death their due reward.

But if there be in glory ought of good,
It may by means far different be attain'd

Without ambition, war, or violence;

By deeds of peace, by wisdom eminent,

By patience, temperance: I mention still

Him whom thy wrongs with faintly patience
borne

Made famous in a land and times obscure:

Who names not now with honour patient Job?

Poor Socrates (who next more memorable?)

By what he taught and suffer'd for so doing,

For truth's sake suffering death, unjust, lives
now

Equal in fame to proudest conquerors.

Yet if for fame and glory ought be done,

Ought suffer'd; if young African for fame

His wasted country freed from Punic rage,

The deed becomes unprais'd, the man at least,

And loses, though but verbal, his reward.

Shall I seek glory then, as vain men seek,
Oft not deserv'd? I seek not miné, but his
Who sent me, and thereby witness whence I am.

To whom the Tempter murm'ring thus re-
ply'd.

Think not so flight of glory; therein least
Resembling thy great Father: he seeks glory,
And for his glory all things made, all things
Orders and governs; nor content in Heav'n
By all his Angels glorify'd, requires
Glory from men, from all men good or bad,
Wise or unwise, no difference, no exemption;
Above all sacrifice, or hallow'd gift
Glory' he requires, and glory he receives
Promiscuous from all nations, Jew, or Greek,
Or barbarous, nor exception had declar'd;
From us his foes pronounc'd glory' he exacts.

To whom our Saviour fervently reply'd.
And reason; since his word all things produc'd
Though chiefly not for glory as prime end,
But to shew forth his goodness, and impart
His good communicable to every soul
Freely; of whom what could he less expect
Than glory and benediction, that is thanks,
The slightest, easiest readiest recompence

From them who could return him nothing else,
And not returning that would likeliest render
Contempt instead, dishonour, obloquy?
Hard recompence, unsuitable return
For so much good, so much beneficence.
But why should man seek glory, who of his own
Hath nothing, and to whom nothing belongs
But condemnation, ignominy', and shame?
Who for so many benefits receiv'd
Turn'd recreant to God, ingrate and false,
And so of all true good himself despoil'd,
Yet sacrilegious to himself would take
That which to God alone of right belongs;
Yet so much bounty is in God, such grace
That who advance his glory, not their own,
Them he himself to glory will advance.

So spake the Son of God; and here again
Satan had not to answer, but stood struck
With guilt of his own sin, for he himself
Insatiable of glory had lost all,
Yet of another plea bethought him soon.

Of glory, as thou wilt, said he, so deem,
Worth or not worth the seeking, let it pass;
But to a kingdom thou art born, ordain'd
To sit upon thy father David's throne;

By mother's side thy father ; though thy right
Be now in pow'rful hands, that will not part
Easily from possession won with arms :
Judæa now and all the promis'd land,
Reduc'd a province under Roman yoke,
Obeys Tiberius ; nor is always rul'd
With temp'rate sway ; oft have they violated
The temple, oft the law with foul affronts,
Abominations rather, as did once
Antiochus : and think'st thou to regain
Thy right by sitting still, or thus retiring ?
So did not Maccabeus : he indeed
Retir'd into the desert, but with arms ;
And o'er a mighty king so oft prevail'd
That by strong hand his family obtain'd.
Though priests, the crown, and David's throne
usurp'd,
With Modin and her suburbs once content.
If kingdom move thee not, let move thee zeal
And duty ; zeal and duty are not flow ;
But on occasion's forelock watchful wait.
They themselves rather are occasion best,
Zeal of thy Father's house, duty to free
Thy country from her Heathen servitude ;
So shalt thou best fulfil, best verify
The prophets old, who sung thy endless reign ;
The happier reign the sooner it begins ;

Reign then; what canst thou better do the while?

To whom our Saviour answer thus return'd.
All things are best fulfill'd in their due time,
And time there is for all things, Truth hath said;
If of my reign prophetic Writ hath told
That it shall never end, so when begin
The Father in his purpose hath decreed,
He in whose hand all times and seasons roll,
What if he hath decreed that I shall first
Be try'd in humble state, and things adverse,
By tribulations, injuries, insults,
Contempts, and scorns, and snares, and violence,
Suffering, abstaining, quietly expecting,
Without distrust or doubt, that he may know
What I can suffer, how obey? who best
Can suffer, best can do; best reign, who first
Well hath obey'd; just trial ere I merit
My exaltation without change or end.
But what concerns it thee when I begin
My everlasting kingdom, why art thou
Solicitous, what moves thy inquisition;
Knowest thou not that my rising is thy fall,
And my promotion will be thy destruction?

To whom the Tempter inly rack'd reply'd.
Let that come when it comes; all hope is lost

Of my reception into Grace ; what worse ?
For where no hope is left, is left no fear :
If there be worse, the expectation more
Of worse torments me than the feeling can.
I would be at the worst ; worst is my port,
My harbour and my ultimate repose,
The end I would attain, my final good.
My error was my error, and my crime
My crime ; whatever for itself condemn'd,
And will alike be punish'd, whether thou
Reign or reign not ; tho' to that gentle brow
Willingly I could fly, and hope thy reign,
From that placid aspect and meek regard,
Rather than aggravate my evil state,
Would stand between me and thy Father's ire
(Whose ire I dread more than the fire of Hell)
A shelter and a kind of shading cool
Interposition, as a summer's cloud.
If I then to the worst that can be haste,
Why move thy feet so slow to what is best,
Happiest both to thyself and all the world,
That thou who worthiest art should'st be their
king ?
Perhaps thou linger'st in deep thoughts dain'd
Of th' enterprize so hazardous and high ;
No wonder, for though in thee be united
What of perfection can in man be found,
Or human nature can receive, consider

Thy life hath yet been private, most part spent
At home, scarce view'd the Galilean towns,
And once a year Jerusalem, few days
Short sojourn; and what thence could'st thou
observe?

The world thou hast not seen, much less her
glory,
Empires, and monarchs, and their radiant
courts,

Best School of best experience, quickest insight
In all things that to greatest actions lead.

The wisest, unexperienc'd, will be ever
Timorous and loath, with novice modesty,
(As he † who seeking asses found a kingdom)
Irresolute, unhardy, unadventurous:

But I will bring thee where thou soon shalt
quit

Those ruddiments, and see before thine eyes
The monarchies of th' earth, their pomp and
state,

Sufficient introduction to inform
Thee, of thyself so apt, in regal arts,

H 2

† Saul, who seeking his father's lost asses came
to Samuel, and by him was anointed King. The
story is related 1 Sam. ix.

And regal mysteries, that thou may'st know
How best their opposition to withstand.

With that (such pow'r was given him then)
he took

The Son of God up to a mountain high.
It was a mountain at whose verdant feet
A spacious plain out-stretch'd in circuit wide
Lay pleasant; from his side two rivers flow'd,
Th' one winding, th' other strait, and left be-
tween

Fair champain with less rivers interven'd,
Then meeting join'd their tribute to the sea:
Fertile of corn the glebe, of oil and wine;
With Herds the pastures throng'd, with flocks
the hills;

Huge cities and high tow'r'd, that well might
seem

The seats of mightiest monarchs, and so large
The prospect was, that here and there was
room

For barren desert fountainless and dry.
To this high mountain top the tempter brought
Our Saviour, and new train of words began.

Well have we speeded, and o'er hill and dale,
Forest and field and flood, temples and towers,
Cut shorter many a league; here thou behold'st

Assyria and her empire's ancient bounds.
Araxes and the Caspian lake, thence on
As far as Indus east, Euphrates west,
And oft beyond; to south the Persian bay,
And inaccessible th' Arabian drouth:
Here Nineveh, of length within her wall
Several days journey, built by Ninus old,
Of that first golden monarchy the seat,
And seat of Salmanassar, whose success
Israel in long captivity still mourns;
There Babylon, the wonder of all tongues,
As ancient, but rebuilt by him who twice
Judah and all thy father David's house
Led captive, and Jerusalem laid waste,
Till Cyrus set them free; Persepolis
His city there thou seest, and Baetra there
Ecbatana her structure vast there shows,
And Hecatompylos her hundred gates;
There Susa by Clioaspes, amber stream,
The drink of none but kings: of later fame
Built by Emathian, or by Parthian hands,
The great Seleucia, Nisibis, and there
Artaxata, Taredon, Ctesiphon,
Turning with easy eye thou may'st behold.
All these the Parthian, now some ages past,
By great Arsaces led, who founded first
That empire, under his dominion holds,
From the luxurious kings of Antioch won.

And just in time thou com'st to have a view
Of his great pow'r, for now the Parthian king
In Cteiphon hath gather'd all his host
Against the Scythian, whose incursions wild
Have wasted Sogdiana: to her aid
He marches now in haste; see, though from far
His thousands, in what martial equipage
They issue forth, steel bows, and shafts their arms
Of equal dread in flight, or in pursuit;
All horsemen, in which fight they most excel;
See how in warlike muster they appear,
In rhombs and wedges, and half moons and wings.
He look'd and saw what numbers numberless
The city gates out-pour'd, light armed troops
In coats of mail and military pride;
In mail their horses clad, yet fleet and strong,
Prauncing their riders bore, the flow'r and choice
Of many provinces from bound to bound;
From Arachosia, from Candaor east,
And Margiana to the Hyrcanian cliffs
Of Caucasus, and dark Iberian dales,
From Atropatia and the neighb'ring plains
Of Adiabene, Media and the south
Of Susiana, to Balsara's haven.
He saw them in their forms of battle rang'd,
How quick they wheel'd, and flying behind them
shot
Sharp fleet of arrowy show'rs against the face

Of their pursuers, and overcame by flight;
The field all Iron cast a gleaming brown:
Nor wanted clouds of foot, nor on each horn
Cuirassiers all in steel for standing fight,
Chariots or elephants indors'd with Towers
Of archers, nor of lab'ring pioneers
A multitude with spades and axes arm'd
To lay hills plain, fell woods, or valleys fill,
Or where plain was raise hill, or overlay
With bridges rivers proud, as with a yoke;
Mules after these, camels and dromedaries,
And waggons fraught with utensils of war.
Such forces met not, § nor so wide a camp,
When Agrican with all his northern powers
Besieg'd Albracca, as romances tell,
The city' of Gallaphrone, from thence to win
The fairest of her sex Angelica
His daughter, fought by many prowest knights,
Both Paynim, and the Peers of Charlemain.
Such and so numerous was their chivalry;

§ What Milton here alludes to, is related in Boiardo's Orlando Innamorato. L. i. Canto x. where the number of forces which Agrican the Tartar king brings into the field, is said to be no less than two million two hundred thousand.

At sight whereof the fiend yet more presum'd.
And to our Saviour thus his words renew'd.

That thou may'st know I seek not to engage
Thy virtue, and not every way secure
On no slight grounds thy safety; hear, and
mark

To what end I have brought thee hither and
shown

All this fair sight; thy kingdom though foretold
By Prophet or by Angel, unless thou
Endeavour as thy father David did,

Thou never shalt obtain: prediction still

In all things, and all men, supposes means,
Without means us'd, what it predicts revokes.

But say thou wert possess'd of David's throne
By free consent of all, none opposit,

Samaritan or Jew; how could'st thou hope

Long to enjoy it quiet and secure,

Between two such inclosing enemies

Roman and Parthian? therefore one of these

Thou must make sure thy own, the Parthian
first

By my advice, as nearer, and of late

Found able by invasion to annoy

Thy country, and captive lead away her king

Antigonus' and old Hyrcanus bound,

Maugre the Roman ; it shall be my task
To render thee the Parthian at dispose ;
Choose which thou wilt by conquest or by league.
By him thou shalt regain, without him not,
That which alone can truly reinstall thee
In David's royal seat, his true successor,
Deliverance of thy brethren, those ~~ten~~ tribes
Whose offspring in his territory yet serve,
In Habor, and among the Medes dispers'd ;
Ten sons of Jacob, two of Joseph lost
Thus long from Israel, serving as of old
Their fathers in the land of Egypt serv'd,
This offer sets before thee to deliver.
These if from servitude thou shalt restore
To their inheritance, then, nor till then,
Thou on the throne of David in full glory,
From Egypt to Euphrates and beyond
Shalt reign, and Rome or Cæsar not need fear.

To whom our Saviour answer'd thus unmov'd.
Much ostentation vain of fleshly arm,
And fragil arms, much instrument of war,
Long in preparing, soon to nothing brought,
Before mine eyes thou' hast set, and in my ear
Vented much policy, and projects deep
Of enemies, of aids, battles and leagues,
Plausible to the world, to me worth nought.

Means I must use thou say'st, prediction else
Will unpredict and fail me of the throne:
My time I told thee (and that time for thee
Were better farthest off) is not yet come;
When that comes, think not thou to find me slack
On my part aught endeavouring, or to need
Thy politic maxims, or that cumbersome
Luggage of war there shown me, argument
Of human weakness rather than of strength.
My brethren, as thou call'st them, those ten tribes
I must deliver, if I mean to reign
David's true heir, and his full sceptre sway
To just extent over all Israel's sons;
But whence to thee this zeal, where was it then
For Israel, or for David, or his throne,
When thou stood'st up his tempter to the pride
Of numb'ring Israel, which cost the lives
Of threescore and ten thousand Israelites
By three days pestilence? such was thy zeal
To Israel then, the same that now to me.
As for those captive tribes, themselves were they
Who wrought their own captivity, fell off
From God to worship calves, the deities
Of Egypt, Baal next and Ashtaroath,
And all the idolatries of Heathen round,
Besides their other worse than heath'nish crimes;
Nor in the land of their captivity
Humbled themselves, or penitent besought

The God of their forefathers; but so dy'd
Impenitent, and left a race behind
Like to themselves, distinguishable scarce
From Gentiles, but by circumsion vain,
And God with idols in their worship join'd.
Should I of these the liberty regard,
Who freed, as to their ancient patrimony,
Unhumbled, unrepentant, unreform'd,
Headlong would follow'; and to their God's
perhaps

Of Bethel and of Dan? no, let them serve
Their enemies, who serve idols with God.
Yet he at length, time to himself best known,
Remembring Abraham, by some wondrous call
May bring them back repentant and sincere,
And at their passing cleave th' Assyrian flood,
While to their native land with joy they haste,
As the Red Sea and Jordan once he cleft,
When to the promis'd land their fathers pass'd;
To this due time and providence I leave them.

So spake Israel's true King, and to the Fiend
Made answer meet, that made void all his wiles.
So fares it when with truth falsehood contends.

THE END OF THE THIRD BOOK.

PARADISE REGAIN'D

BOOK IV.

PERPLEX'D and troubled at his bad success
The Tempter stood, nor had what to reply,
Discovered in his fraud, thrown from his hope
So oft, and the persuasive rhetoric
That fleek'd his tongue, and won so much on
Eve
So little here, nay lost; but Eve was Eve,
This far his over-match, who self-deceiv'd
And rash, before hand had no better weigh'd
The strength he was to cope with, or his own:
But as a man who had been matchless held
In cunning, over-reach'd where least he thought
To salve his credit, and for very spite,
Still will be tempting him who foils him still,
And never cease, though to his shame the more,
Or as a swarm of flies in vintage time,
About the wine-press where sweet must is
pour'd,

Beat off, returns as oft with humming found;
Or surging waves against a solid rock,
Though all to shivers dash'd, th' assault renew,
Vain batt'ry, and in froth or bubbles end?
So Satan, whom repulse upon repulse
Met ever, and to shameful silence brought,
Yet gives not o'er though desp'rate of success
And his vain importunity pursues.

He brought our Saviour to the western side
Of that high mountain, whence he might behold
Another plain, long but in breadth not wide,
Wash'd by the southern sea, and on the north
To equal length back'd with a ridge of hills,
That screen'd the fruits of th'earth and seats of
men

From cold Septentrion blasts, thence in the mid'st
Divided by a river, of whose banks
On each side an imperial city stood,
With tow'rs and temples proudly elevate
On seven small hills, with palaces adorn'd,
Porches and theatres, baths, aqueducts,
Statues and trophies, and triumphal arcs,
Gardens and groves presented to his eyes,
Above the height of mountains interpos'd
By what strange parallax or optic skill
Of vision multiply'd through air, or glass
Of telescope, were curious to enquire:
And now the Tempter thus his silence broke

The city which thou see'st no other deem
Than great and glorious Rome, queen of the
earth

So far renown'd, and with the spoils enrich'd
Of nations; there the capitol thou seest

Above the rest lifting his stately head

On the Tarpeian rock, her citadel

Impregnable, and there mount Palatine,

Th' imperial palace, compass huge and high

The structure skill of noblest architects,

With gilded battlements, conspicuous far,

Turrets and terraces, and glitt'ring spires.

Many a fair edifice besides, more like

Houses of God, (so well I have dispos'd

My airy microscope) thou may'st behold

Outside and inside both, pillars and roofs,

Carv'd work, the hand of fam'd artificers

In cedar, marble, ivory or gold.

Thence to the gates cast round thine eye and see

What conflux issuing forth, or entering in,

Pretors, proconsuls to their provinces

Hasting, or on return, in robes of state;

Lictors and rods, the ensigns o' their power,

Legions and cohorts, turms of horse and wings

Or embassies from regions far remote

In various habits on the Appian road

Or on th' Emilian, some from farthest south,

Syene', and where the shadow both way falls,

Meroe Nilotic isle, and more to west,
The realm of Bocchus to the Black-moor sea;
From th' Asian Kings and Parthian among
these,
From India and the golden Chersonese
And utmost Indian isle Tabrobane,
Dusk faces with white filken turbans wreath'd;
From Gallia, Gades, and the British west,
Germans and Scythians, and Sarmatians north
Beyond Danubius to the Tauric pool:
All nations now to Rome obedience pay,
To Rome's great emperor, whose wide domain
In ample territory, wealth and power,
Civility of manners, arts and arms,
And long renown, thou justly may'st prefer
Before the Parthian; these two thrones except
The rest are barb'rous, and scarce worth the
fight,
Shar'd among petty kings too far remov'd;
These having shewn thee, I have shewn thee all
The kingdoms of the world, and all their glory.
This emperor hath no son, and now is old,
Old and lascivious, and from Rome retir'd
To Capreæ an Island small but strong
On the Campanian shore with purpose there
His horrid lusts in private to enjoy,
Committing to a wicked favorite
All public cares, and yet of him suspicious,

Hated of all, and hating ; with what ease,
Indued with regal virtues as thou art,
Appearing, and beginning noble deeds,
Might'st thou expel this monster from his throne
Now made a sty, and in his place ascending
A victor people free from servile yoke ?
And with my help thou may'st ; to me the power
Is giv'n, and by that right I give it thee.
Aim therefore at no less than all the world,
Aim at the high'st, without the highest attain'd
Will be for thee no fitting, or not long,
On David's throne, be prophecy'd what will.

To whom the Son of God unmov'd reply'd.
Nor doth this grandeur and majestic show
Of luxury, though call'd magnificence,
More than of arms before, allure mine eye,
Much less my mind ; though thou should'st add
to tell

Their sumptuous gluttonies, and gorgeous feasts
On citron tables or Atlantic stone,
(For I have also heard, perhaps have read)
Their wines of Setia, Cales, and Falerne,
Chios, and Crete, and how they quaff in gold,
Crystal and myrrhine cups imboss'd with gems
And studs of pearl, to me should'st tell who thirst
And hunger still : then embassies thou show'st
From nations far and nigh ; what honor that,

But tedious waste of time to sit and hear
So many hollow compliments and lies,
Outlandish flatteries? then proceed't to talk
Of th' emperor, how easily subdued,
How gloriously; I shall, thou say'st, expel
A brutish monster: what if I withal
Expel a Devil who first made him such?
Let his tormenter conscience find him out;
For him I was not sent, nor yet to free
That people victor once, now vile and base
Deservedly made vassal, who once just
Frugal, and mild, and temp'rate, conquer'd well
But govern ill the nations under yoke
Peeling their provinces, exhausted all
By lust and rapine; first ambitious grown
Of triumph, that insulting vanity;
Then cruel, by their sports to blood inur'd
Of fighting beasts, and men to beasts expos'd
Luxurious by their wealth, and greedier still
And from the daily scene effeminate,
What wise and valiant man would seek to free
These thus degenerate, by themselves enslav'd,
Or could of inward slaves make outward free?
Know therefore when my season comes to sit
On David's throne, it shall be like a tree
Spreading and overshadowing all the earth,
Or as a stone that shall to pieces dash

All monarchies besides throughout the world
And of my kingdom there shall be no end:
Means there shall be to this, but what the
means,
Is not for thee to know, nor me to tell.

' To whom the Tempter impudent reply'd,
I see all offers made by me how slight
Thou valuest, because offer'd, and reject'st
Nothing will please the difficult and nice,
Or nothing more than still to contradict,
On th' other side know also thou, that I
Nor what I part with mean to give for nought;
All these which in a moment thou behold'st
The kingdoms of the world to thee I give;
For giv'n to me, I give to whom I please,
No trifle; yet with this reserve, not else,
On this condition, if thou wilt fall down,
And worship me as thy superior lord,
Easily done, and hold them all of me;
For what can less so great a gift deserve?

Whom thus our Saviour answer'd with disdain
I never lik'd thy talk, thy offers less,
Now both abhor, since thou hast dar'd to utter
Th' abominable terms, impious condition;
But I endure the time, till which expir'd,

Thou hast permission on me. It is written
The first of all commandments, Thou shalt
worship

The Lord thy God and only him shalt serve ;
And dar'st thou to the Son of God propound
To worship thee accurs'd, now more accurs'd
For this attempt bolder than that on Eve,
And more blasphemous ? which expect to rue.
The kingdoms of the world to thee were given,
Permitted rather, and by thee usurp'd ;
Or the donation none thou canst produce ;
If giv'n, by whom but by the king of kings,
God over all supreme ? if giv'n to thee,
By thee how fairly is the giver now
Repaid ? But gratitude in thee is lost
Long since. Wert thou so void of fear or shame,
As offer them to me the Son of God,
To me my own, on such abhorred pact,
That I fall down and worship thee as God ?
Get thee behind me ; plain thou now appear'st
That evil one. Satan for ever damn'd.

To whom the Fiend with fear abash'd re-
ply'd
Be not so sore offended, Son of God,
Though sons of God both angels are and Men,
If I to try whether in higher sort

Than these thou bear'st that title, have propos'd
What both from Men and Angels I receive,
Tetrarchs of fire, air, flood, and on the earth
Nations besides from all the quartered winds,
God of this world invok'd and world beneath ;
Who then thou art, whose coming is foretold
To me so fatal, me it most concerns,
The trial hath indamag'd thee no way,
Rather more honour left and more esteem ;
Me nought advantag'd, missing what I aim'd,
Therefore let pass, as they are transitory,
The kingdoms of this world ; I shall no more
Advise thee ! gain them as thou can'st, or not,
And thou thyself seem'st otherwise inclin'd
Than to a worldly crown, addicted more
To contemplation and profound dispute,
As by that early action may be judg'd
When slipping from thy mother's eye thou
went'st

Alone into the Temple ; there wast found
Among the gravest Rabbies disputant
On points and questions fitting Moses chair †
Teaching not taught ; the childhood shows the
Man,

† Moses chair was that in which the doctors
sitting, expounded the law, either publicly to the
people, or privately to their disciples.

As morning shows the day. Be famous then
By wisdom ; as thy empire must extend
So let extend thy mind o'er all the world
In knowledge, all things in it comprehend :
All knowledge is not couch'd in Moses Law,
The Pentateuch, or what the Prophets wrote ;
The Gentiles also know, and write and teach
To admiration, led by nature's light ;
And with the Gentiles much thou must converse,

Ruling them by persuasion as thou mean'st ;
Without their learning how wilt thou with
them,

Or them with thee hold conversation meet ?
How wilt thou reason with them how refute
Their idolisms, traditions, paradoxes ?
Error by his own arms is best evinc'd
Look once more ere we leave this specular
mount

Westward, much nearer by southwest, behold
Where on the Ægean shore a city stands
Built nobly, pure the air, and light the soil,
Athens the eye of Greece, mother of arts
And eloquence, native to famous wits
Or hospitable, in her sweet recess.

City' or suburban, studious walks and shades ;
See there the olive grove of Academe,

Plato's retirement, where the Attic bird †
Trills her thick-warbled notes the summer long;
There flowery hill Hymettus with the sound,
Of bees industrious murmur oft invites
To studious musing; there Ilissus rolls
His whisp'ring stream; within the walls then
view

The schools of ancient sages; his who bred
Great Alexander to subdue the world,
Lyceum there, and painted Stoa next:
There thou shalt hear and learn the secret
power

Of harmony in tones and numbers hit
By voice or hand, and various-measur'd verse,
Æolian charms and Dorian lyric odes,
And his who gave them birth, but higher sung,
Blind Melesignes thence Homer call'd,
Whose poem Phœbus challeng'd for his own.
Thence what the lofty grave tragedians taught
In Chorus or Iambic, teacher best
Of moral prudence, with delights receiv'd
In brief sententious precepts, while they treat
Of fate, and chance, and change in human life;

† The nightingale, for Philomela who accord-
ing to the fable was changed into a nightingale,
was the daughter of Pardion King of Athens.

High actions, and high passions best describing;
Thence to the famous orators repair,
Those ancient, whose resistless eloquence
Wielded at will that fierce democratic,
Shook the arsenal and fulmin'd over Greece,
To Macedon and Artaxerxes throne:
To sage philosophy next lend thine ear,
From Heav'n descended to the low-rooft house
Of Socrates; see there his tenement,
Whom well inspir'd the oracle pronounc'd,
Wiseſt of men; from whose mouth iſſu'd forth
Melliſſuous ſtreams that water'd all the ſchools
Of Academies old and new, with thoſe
Sirnam'd Peripatetics, and the ſect
Epicurean, and the Stoic ſevere;
Theſe here revolve, or, as thou lik'ſt, at home,
Till time mature thee to a kingdom's weight;
Theſe rules will render thee a king complete
Within thyſelf, much more with empire join'd.

To whom our Saviour ſagely thus reply'd.
Think not but that I know theſe things, or
think

I know them not; not therefore am I ſhort
Of knowing what I ought: he who receives
Light from above, from the fountain of light,
No other doctrine needs, tho' granted true;
But theſe are falſe, or little elſe but dreams,

Conjectures, fancies, built on nothing firm,
The first and wisest of them all profess'd
To know this only, that he nothing knew ;
The next to fabling fell and smooth conceits ;
A third sort doubted all things, though plain
sense ;

Other in virtue plac'd felicity,
But virtue join'd with riches and long life ;
In corporeal pleasures he, and careless ease ;
The Stoic last in philosophic pride,
By him call'd virtue : and his virtuous man,
Wise, perfect in himself, and all possessing,
Equals to God, oft shames not to prefer,
As fearing God nor man, contemning all
Wealth, pleasure, pain or torment, death and life
Which when he lists, he leaves, or boasts he can,
For all his tedious talk is but vain boast,
Of subtle shifts conviction to evade.

Alas what can they teach, and not mislead,
Ignorant of themselves, of God much more,
And how the world began, and how man fell
Degraded by himself, on grace depending ?
Much of the soul they talk, but all awry.
And in themselves seek virtues and to them-
selves

All glory arrogate, to God give none,
Rather accuse him under usual names,
Fortune and Fate, as one regardless quite

Of mortal things. Who therefore seeks in these
True wisdom, finds her not, or by delusion
Far worse, her false resemblance only meets,
An empty cloud. However many books
Wise men have said, are wearisome; who reads
Incessantly, and to his reading brings not
A spirit and judgment equal to superior,
(And what he brings, what needs he elsewhere
seek?)

Uncertain and unsettled still remains,
Deep vers'd in books and shallow in himself,
Crude or intoxicate, collecting toys,
And trifles for choice matters, worth a sponge;
As children gathering pebbles on the shore,
Or if I would delight my private hours
With music or with poem, where so soon
As in our native language can I find
That solace; All our law and story strow'd
With hymns, our psalms with artful terms
inscrib'd,
Our Hebrew songs and harps in Babylon,
That pleas'd so well our victor's ear, declare
That rather Greece from us these arts deriv'd;
Ill imitated, while they loudest sing
The vices of their Deities, and their own
In fable, hymn or song, so personating

Their Gods ridiculous, and themselves past
shame.

Remove their swelling epithets thick laid
As varnish on a harlot's cheek, the rest
'Thin sown with aught of profit or delight,
Will far be found unworthy to compare
With Sion's songs, to all true tastes excelling,
Where God is prais'd aright, and God-like men,
'The Holiest of Holies, and his Saints ;
Such are from God inspir'd, not such from thee,
Unless where moral virtue is express'd
By light of nature not in all quite lost.
Their orators thou then extoll'st, as those
The top of eloquence, statists indeed,
And lovers of their country, as may seem ;
But herein to our prophets far beneath,
As men divinely taught, and better teaching
The solid rules of civil government
In their majestic unaffected stile
'Than all the' oratory of Greece and Rome.
In them is plainest taught, and easiest learnt,
What makes a nation happy', and keeps it so,
What ruins kingdoms, and lays cities flat ;
These only with our law best form a king.

So spake the Son of God ; but Satan now
Quite at a loss, for all his darts were spent,
'Thus to our Saviour with stern brow replied.

Since neither wealth, nor honor, arms, nor
arts,

Kingdom nor empire pleases thee, nor aught
By me propos'd in life contemplative;
Or active, tended on by glory' or fame,
What dost thou in this world? the wilderness
For thee is fittest place; I found thee there,
And thither will return thee; yet remember
What I foretel thee, soon thou shalt have cause
To wish thou never hadst rejected thus
Nicely or cautiously my offer'd aid,
Which would have set thee in short time with
ease

On David's throne, or throne of all the world,
Now at full age, fulness of time, thy seasons
When prophecies of thee are best fulfilled,
Now contrary, if I read aught in Heaven,
Or Heav'n write aught of fate, by what the stars
Voluminous, or single characters,
In their conjunction met, give me to spell.
Sorrows, and labors, opposition, hate
Attends thee, scorn, reproaches, injuries,
Violence and stripes and lastly cruel death;
A kingdom they portend thee, but what king-
dom.

Real or allegoric I discern not,
Nor when, eternal sure, as without end,

Without beginning; for no date prefix'd
Directs me in the starry rubric set.

So saying he took (for still he knew his power
Not yet expir'd) and to the wilderness
Brought back the Son of God, and left him
there,

Feigning to disappear. Darkness now rose,
As day-light sunk, and brought in louring night:
Her shadowy offspring, unsubstantial both,
Privation mere of light and absent day.

Our Saviour meek and with untroubled mind
After his airy jaunt, though hurried fore,
Hungry and cold betook him to his rest,
Wherever, under some concourse of shades,
Whose branching arms thick interwin'd might
shield

From dews and damps of night his shelter'd
head

But shelter'd in vain, for at his head
The Tempter watch'd, and soon with ugly
dreams

Disturb'd his sleep! and either tropic now
'Gan thunder, and both ends of Heav'n, the
clouds

From many a horrid rift abortive pour'd
Fierce rain with lightning mix'd, water with
fire

In ruin reconcil'd ; nor slept the winds
Within their stony caves, but rush'd abroad
From the four hinges of the world, and fell
On the vex'd wilderness, whose tallest pines,
Though rooted deep as high, and sturdiest oaks
Bow'd their stiff necks loaden with stormy blasts,
Or torn up sheer : ill wast thou shrouded then,
O patient Son of God, yet only stood'st
Unshaken ; nor yet stay'd the terror there,
Infernal ghosts, and Hellish furies, round
Environ'd thee, some howl'd, some yell'd, some
shriek'd,

Some bent at thee their fiery darts, while thou
Sat'st unapall'd in calm and sinless peace.

Thus pass'd the night so foul, till morning fair
Came forth with pilgrim steps in amice gray,
Who with her radiant finger still'd the roar
Of thunder, chas'd the clouds, and laid the
winds,

And grisly spectres, which the Fiend had rais'd
To tempt the Son of God with terrors dire.
And now the sun with more effectual beams
Had cheer'd the face of earth, and dry'd the wet
From drooping plant, or dropping tree ; the
birds,

Who all things now behold more fresh and
green,

After a night of storm so ruinous,

Clear'd up their choicest notes in bush and spray,
To gratulate the sweet return of morn;
Nor yet amidst this joy and brightest morn
Was absent, after all his mischief done,
The prince of darkness, glad would also seem
Of this fair change, and to our Saviour came,
Yet with no new device, they all were spent,
Rather by this his last affront resolv'd,
Desperate of better course, to vent his rage,
And mad despite to be so oft repell'd.
Him walking on a sunny hill he found,
Back'd on the north and west by a thick wood;
Out of the wood he starts in wonted shape,
And in a careless mood thus to him said,

Fair morning yet betides thee, Son of God,
After a dismal night; I heard the wrack
As earth and sky would mingle; but myself
Was distant; and these flaws, though mortals
fear them

As dang'rous to the pillar'd frame of Heav'n,
Or to the earth's dark basis underneath,
Are to the main as inconsiderable,
And harmless, if not wholesome as a sneeze
To man's less universe, and soon are gone;
Yet as being oft times noxious where they light
On man, beast, plant, wasteful and turbulent,
Like turbulencies in th' affairs of men,

Over whose heads they roar, and seem to point,
They oft fore signify and threaten ill;
This tempest at this desert most was bent;
Of men at thee, for only thou here dwell'it.
Did I not tell thee, if thou didst reject
The perfect season offer'd with my aid
To win thy destin'd seat, but wilt prolong
All to the push of fate, pursue thy way
Of gaining David's throne no man knows when,
For both the when and how is no where told,
Thou shalt be what thou art ordain'd, no doubt;
For Angels have proclaim'd it, but concealing
The time and means: each act is rightliest
done,

Not when it must, but when it may be best,
If thou observe not this, be sure to find,
What I foretold thee, many a hard assay,
Of dangers and adversities, and pains,
Ere thou of Israel's sceptre get fast hold;
Whereof this ominous night that clos'd thee
round,
So many terrors, voices, prodigies
May warn thee, as a sure fore-going sign.

So talk'd he, while the Son of God went on
And stay'd not, but in brief him answer'd thus.

Me worse than wet thou find'st not; other
harm
Those terrors which thou speak'st of, did me
none;
I never fear'd they could, though noising loud
And threatning nigh; what they can do as signs
Betokening, or ill boding, I contemn
As false portents, not sent from God, but thee;
Who knowing I shall reign past thy preventing
Obtrud'st thy offer'd air, that I accepting
At least might seem to hold all power of thee,
Ambitious Spi'rit, and wouldst be thought my
God,
And storm'st refus'd thinking to terrify
Me to thy will; desist, thou art discern'd
And toil'st in vain, nor me in vain molest.

To whom the Fiend now swoln with rage
reply'd.
Then hear, O Son of David, Virgin-born
For Son of God to me is yet in doubt:
Of the Messiah I have heard foretold
By all the prophets: of thy birth at length
Announc'd by Gabriel with the first I knew,
And of th' angelic song in Bethlehem field,
On thy birth-night, that sung thee Saviour born.
From that time seldom have I ceas'd to eye
Thy infancy, thy childhood, and thy youth,

Thy manhood last, though yet in private bred;
Till at the ford of Jordan whither all
Flock'd to the Baptist, I among the rest.
Though not to be baptiz'd, by voice from Hea-
ven

Heard thee pronounc'd the Son of God belov'd
Thenceforth I thought thee worth my nearer
view

And narrower scrutiny, that I might learn
In what degree or meaning thou art call'd
The Son of God, which bears no single sense;
The Son of God I also am, or was,
And if I was, I am; relation stands;
All men are Sons of God; yet thee I thought
In some respect far higher so declar'd.
Therefore I watch'd thy footsteps from that
hour,

And follow'd thee still on to this waste wild;
Whereby all best conjectures I collect
Thou art to be my fatal enemy.
Good reason then, if I beforehand seek
To understand my adversary, who
And what he is; his wisdom, pow'r, intent;
By parl, or composition, truce, or league
To win him, or win from him what I can.
An opportunity I here have had
To try thee, sift thee, and confess have found thee

Proof against all temptation, as a rock
Of adamant, and as a centre, firm,
To th' utmost of mere man both wise and good,
Not more; for honors, riches, kingdoms, glory
Have been before contemn'd, and may again;
Therefore to know what more thou art than
man,

Worth naming Son of God by voice from
Heaven

Another method I must now begin.

So say'ing he caught him up, and without
wing

Of hippogrif bore through the air sublime
Over the wilderness and o'er the plain;
Till underneath them fair Jerusalem,
The holy city lifted her high towers,
And higher yet the glorious temple rear'd
Her pile, far off appearing like a mount
Of alabaster, topt with golden spires:
There on the highest pinnacle he set
The Son of God, and added thus in scorn.

The stand, if thou wilt stand; to stand upright
I'll ask thee skill; I to thy father's house
Have brought thee, and highest plac'd, highest
is best,

Now show thy progeny; if not to stand,

Cast thyself down; safely, if Son of God:
For it is written, He will give command
Concerning thee to his Angels, in their hands
They shall uplift thee, lest at any time
Thou chance to dash thy foot against a stone.

To whom thus Jesus; Also it is written,
Tempt not the Lord thy God: he said and stood
But Satan smitten with amazement fell;
As when earth's son Antæus (to compare
Small thing with greatest) in Irafra strove
With Jove's Alcides, and oft foil'd still rose,
Receiving from his mother earth new strength
Fresh from his fall, and fiercer grapple join'd,
Throttled at length in th' air, expir'd and fell;
So after many a foil the Tempter proud,
Renewing fresh assaults, amidst his pride
Fell whence he stood to see his victor fall.
And as that Theban monster † that propos'd
Her riddle, and him, who solv'd, it not, devour'd
That once found out and solv'd, for grief and
spite
Cast herself headlong from the Ismenian steep;
So struck with dread and anguish fell the Fiend.

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† The Sphinx, whose riddle being resolved by
Oedipus, she threw herself into the sea.

And to his crew, that sat consulting, brought
Joyless triumphals of his hop'd success,
Ruin, and desperation, and dismay,
Who durst proudly tempt the Son of God.
So Satan fell; and strait a fiery globe
Of Angels on full sail of wing flew nigh,
Who on their plummy vans receiv'd him soft
From his uneasy station, and upbore
As on a floating couch through the blithe air,
Then in a flow'ry valley set him down
On a green bank, and set before him spread
A table of celestial food, divine
Ambrosial fruits, fetch'd from the tree of life,
And from the fount of life ambrosial drink,
That soon refresh'd him wearied, and repair'd
What hunger, if aught hunger had impair'd,
Or thirst; and as he fed, angelic quires
Sung heav'nly anthems of his victory
Over temptation, and the Tempter proud.

True Image of the Father, whether thron'd
In the bosom of bliss, and light of light
Conceiving, or remote from Heaven, inshrind
In fleshly tabernacle, and human form,
Wand'ring the wilderness, whatever place,
Habit, or state, or motion, still expressing
The Son of God, with God-like force endu'd
Against th' attempter of thy Father's throne,

And thief of Paradise ; him long of old
Thou didst debel, and down from Heav'n cast
With all his army, now thou hast aveng'd
Supplanted Adam, and by vanquishing
Temptation, hast regain'd lost Paradise ;
And frustrated the conquest fraudulent :
He never more henceforth will dare set foot
In Paradise to tempt : his snares are broke :
For though that seat of earthly bliss be fail'd,
A fairer Paradise is founded now
For Adam and his chosen sons, whom thou
A Saviour art come down to re-install
Where they shall dwell secure, when time shall
be,
Of Tempter and temptation without fear.
But thou, infernal Serpent, shalt not long
Rule in the clouds ; like an autumnal star
Or lightning thou shalt fall from Heav'n, trod
down
Under his feet : for proof, ere this thou feel'st
Thy wound, yet not thy last and deadliest
wound,
By this repulse receiv'd, and hold't in Hell
No triumph ; in all her gates Abaddon rues
Thy bold attempt ; hereafter learn with awe
To dread the Son of God : he all unarm'd
Shall chase thee with the terror of his voice
From thy demoniac holds, possession foul,

Thee and thy legions ; yelling they shall fly,
And beg to hide them in a herd of swine,
Lest he command them down into the deep
Bound, and to torment sent before their time.
Hail Son of the most High, heir of both worlds,
Queller of Satan, on thy glorious work
Now enter, and begin to save mankind.

Thus the Son of God our Saviour meek
Sung victor, and from heavenly feast refresh'd
Brought on his way with joy ; he unobserv'd
Home to his mother's house private return'd.

THE END.

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